#1

NOW

THANOS

LEMIRE
DEODATO
MARTIN

#1

MARVEL

FROM A DISTANCE, THE **BLACK QUADRANT** SEEMS LIKE ANY OTHER SMALL MOON IN THE OUTER RIM OF SPACE. BUT DO NOT BE FOOLED, FOR THIS PLACE IS **NOT** LIKE ANY OTHER...

...FOR HERE SITS THE STRONGHOLD OF THE **BLACK ORDER:** AN UNRIVALED COLLECTION OF MERCENARIES, MALCONTENTS, AND SLAVE MASTERS THAT HAS HELD THIS SECTOR OF SPACE IN ITS GRIP FOR THE BETTER PART OF A SOLAR YEAR.

AND AT THE HEART OF THEIR COMPOUND, LIKE A JAGGED SPLINTER, STANDS A TOWER. THIS IS WHERE **HE** WATCHES...

...**CORVUS GLAIVE.** MASTER OF THE BLACK ORDER. RULER OF THE BLACK QUADRANT. THE WORST OF THE WORST BOW TO HIM AND HE, IN TURN, RULES WITH A FIRM BUT FAIR HAND.

There was a time when Corvus Glaive bowed to **another.** There was a time when he was not the alpha, but rather the subordinate of a great **tyrant.**

This tyrant was known by many names. Some called him the **Mad Titan.** Corvus Glaive had called him **Master.**

But no more. For this tyrant had become distracted by the doings of men and embroiled in various wars, both secret and civil. In short, the tyrant had **abandoned his territory.**

And in his absence, Corvus Glaive had taken control. He gathered an army and took this place for himself.

He had finally become **the king** he always knew he was born to be.

THE MAD TITAN HAD RULED WITH FEAR AND **BRUTALITY.** BUT CORVUS GLAIVE KNEW HOW TO INSPIRE MEN.

WORD OF HIS GENEROSITY, AND THE SPOILS THOSE LOYAL TO HIM WOULD SHARE IN, SPREAD THROUGH THE GALAXY AND HIS BLACK ORDER **GREW,** NEW TERRITORIES COMING UNDER CORVUS' CONTROL EVERY DAY.

FOR ALL ITS EVIL, THE BLACK QUADRANT WORKED LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE UNDER CORVUS GLAIVE. ORDER AND CONTROL WERE THE PILLARS OF HIS KINGDOM.

HERE, ALL WAS AS CORVUS COMMANDED. ALL WAS AS **HE** WANTED IT TO BE.

AND THEN...

THOOM

THANOS RETURNS

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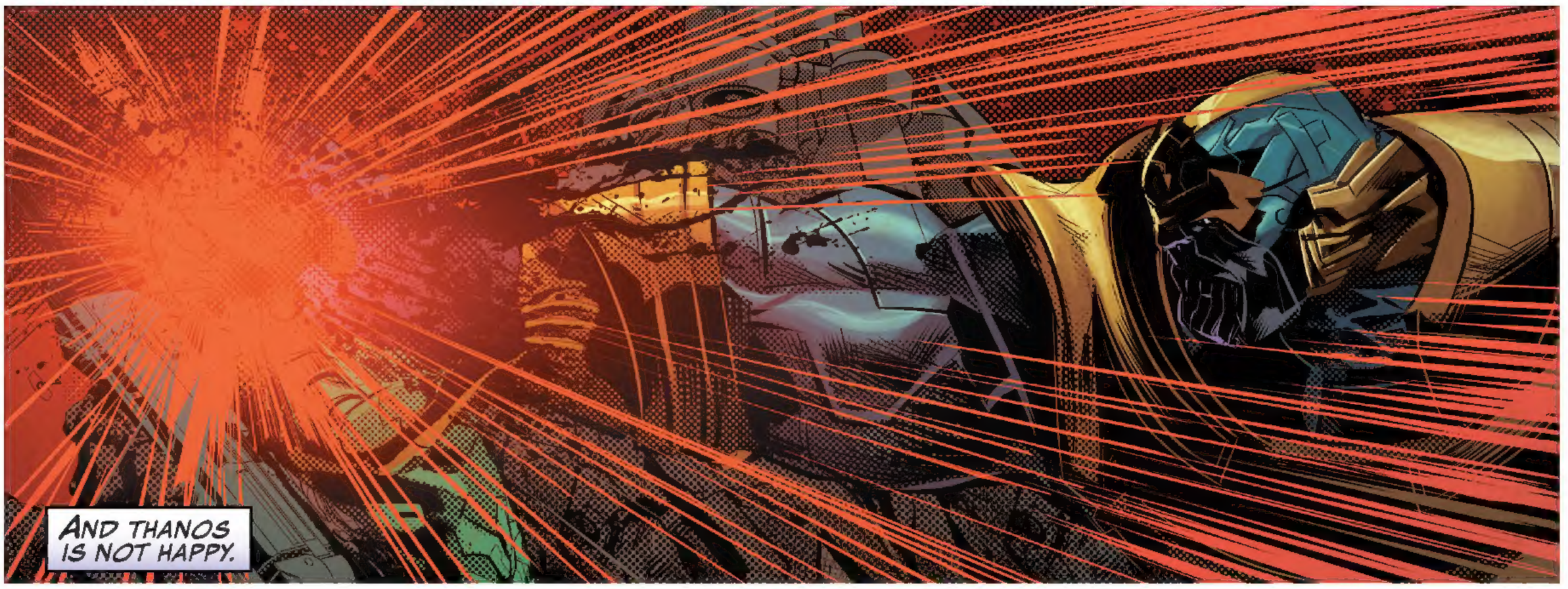
AND THANOS IS NOT HAPPY.

SHRACK

GAH!

RMMMMMBBBLLL

CHAK
CHAK

KA-CHOOM

THOOM

SO...YOU HAVE COME BACK.

YOU HAVE FORFEITED THIS SECTOR. IT IS *MINE* NOW, THANOS...

...AND I AM PREPARED TO *DIE FOR* IT.

...YES. YOU ARE.

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE GALAXY, A CHAMPION GOES FOX HUNTING...

WHERE IS HE?

WHERE IS WHO?

YOU KNOW WHO.

LOOK, BUDDY, THIS PLACE IS FOR PAYING CUSTOMERS. I DON'T WANT ANY--URK!

I WILL ASK AGAIN. WHERE IS HE?

B-BACK ROOM.

THANK YOU.

WELL, WELL, AREN'T YOU A STRAPPING FELLOW. PLEASE, COME IN. JOIN US. THE MORE THE MERRIER!

I DID NOT COME HERE TO PARTAKE IN DEBAUCHERY. I AM--

OH, I *KNOW* WHO YOU ARE. *TRYCO SLATTERUS*, THE SELF-PROCLAIMED "*CHAMPION OF THE UNIVERSE.*"

I WONDER, SLATTERUS, HOW DID YOU DECIDE THAT YOU WERE NOT MERELY A CHAMPION BUT *THE* CHAMPION? SEEMS A RATHER LOFTY THING TO CALL ONESELF, NO?

OH? AND IS CALLING YOURSELF *STARFOX* REALLY ANY BETTER?

WELL, YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ME THERE, TRYCO.

I WAS TASKED WITH BRINGING YOU TO TITAN. SO WE CAN STAND HERE AND BANTER ALL DAY, OR WE CAN FIGHT ABOUT IT, OR YOU CAN JUST GET DRESSED AND MEET ME OUTSIDE. TIME IS WASTING.

TASKED? TASKED BY WHOM?

BY *YOUR NEPHEW.*

THANE REQUIRES AN AUDIENCE WITH YOU, STARFOX. AND HE WILL NOT BE LEFT WAITING.

AND, BACK IN THE BLACK QUADRANT, CORVUS GLAIVE PUTS UP A FIGHT.

CLANG

OR AT LEAST HE TRIES TO.

UNGH!

YOU ABANDONED THIS SECTOR, THANOS! YOU ABANDONED THIS PLACE!

I--I ONLY WANTED SOMETHING OF *MY OWN!* SURELY YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

UNDERSTAND? I *UNDERSTAND* THAT YOU TOOK THAT WHICH WAS NOT YOURS. I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU *OVERSTEPPED,* CORVUS GLAIVE.

MY BLADE! IF YOU DESTROY IT, YOU *DESTROY ME*, THANOS. PLEASE, SHOW *MERCY.*

NOW YOU *BEG?*

HAD YOU SHOWN MORE SPINE, I *MAY* HAVE SPARED YOU, CORVUS.

KRKKT

BUT YOU ONCE WERE LOYAL TO ME, AND THAT DOES MEAN SOMETHING. SO, I WILL GIVE YOU A *CHOICE*, CORVUS GLAIVE...

...WITH YOUR BLADE DESTROYED, YOU WILL SOON DIE AS WELL. SO YOU CAN *KILL YOURSELF* NOW AND FINISH IT, OR YOU CAN LET *ME DO IT.*

MAKE NO MISTAKE, THIS *IS* MERCY. FOR IF I WERE TO DO IT, YOU WOULD SUFFER *TENFOLD.*

I--

KKT!

AND SO, THANOS TAKES HIS THRONE BACK.
BUT ALL IS NOT RIGHT. FOR FAR AWAY, A CHAIN REACTION OF EVENTS HAS BEEN SET INTO MOTION...

...AND WHILE THEY DO NOT KNOW IT YET, THE **TRUE** DESTROYERS OF THE GALAXY ARE COMING TOGETHER AS RELUCTANT ALLIES.

YOU EXPECT ME TO FLY AROUND IN *THAT?!*

I AM EROS, ONE OF THE ETERNALS OF TITAN, SON OF MENTOR AND SUI-SAN. I WAS AN *AVENGER.* I WILL NOT FLY AROUND IN THIS-- THIS *SPACE TURD!*

DROP THE *ACT,* STARFOX.

THE ACT?

YOU MAY *FOOL EVERYONE* ELSE WITH THIS HOITY-TOITY SPACE PRINCE BIT. OR IF NOT THIS, THEN THE WHOLE FUN-LOVING ADVENTURER SHTICK.

YOU'RE SMARTER THAN ANYONE GIVES YOU CREDIT FOR. YOU USE THE ACT TO DISARM PEOPLE AND MANIPULATE THEM. BUT I AM NOT BUYING IT.

TRYCO SLATTERUS... I DON'T THINK I LIKE YOU VERY MUCH.

LIKEWISE. NOW *CAN IT* AND GET IN THE SHIP. BEFORE WE GO TO TITAN WE HAVE ONE MORE STOP TO MAKE.

WHY SHOULD I GO ANYWHERE WITH YOU? I DON'T PARTICULARLY CARE WHAT MY NEPHEW THANE HAS TO SAY.

NEITHER DO I.

WELL THEN, WHY THE HELL ARE YOU WORKING FOR HIM?

I HAVE LIVED FOR A LONG, LONG TIME, EROS. AND DESPITE YOUR MOCKERY, I AM A CHAMPION.

FOR CENTURIES I HAVE TRAVELED THE UNIVERSE, CHALLENGING ANYONE AND ANYTHING TO BATTLE. I DO THIS TO PROVE MYSELF. I DO THIS BECAUSE I CAN.

AND NOW YOUR NEPHEW HAS OFFERED ME THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF ALL. AND, GOD HELP ME, HE SEEMS TO THINK WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOU TO HELP COMPLETE IT.

OH, REALLY? AND WHAT, MAY I ASK, IS THIS GREAT CHALLENGE?

NOT WHAT, EROS, BUT RATHER WHOM.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? YOUR BROTHER HAS RETURNED.

WE'RE GOING TO KILL THANOS HIMSELF.

While Tryco Slatterus' words may shock Eros, the fact is that Death and Thanos are **no strangers.**

There is no greater evidence of this than the moon of **Titan.** Once home to a great race of Eternals and their glorious city, it now lies in ruin thanks to Thanos.

And it is here that **Thane,** son of Thanos, waits for Tryco and those he has been dispatched to retrieve. But he does not wait alone...

For it seems that **Death** has found Thane as well.

I didn't hear you arrive.

No one ever does.

THEY'LL BE COMING SOON. TRYCO HAS EROS. JUST LIKE WE PLANNED.

YET YOU STILL SEEM WORRIED.

SHOULDN'T I BE?

"THANOS IS SECURING HIS BASE OF POWER ONCE MORE."

AND EVEN WITH TRYCO, EROS, AND *EVERYTHING ELSE* WE HAVE PLANNED, YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN DEFEAT YOUR FATHER?

I'M NOT AS POWERFUL AS I ONCE WAS. AND MY FATHER IS--HE IS *THANOS.*

"HE IS PRACTICALLY A *GOD.*"

YOU WORRY TOO MUCH, THANE.

I TOLD YOU WHEN I FOUND YOU ALL THOSE MONTHS AGO... I WOULD TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. DON'T YOU *TRUST ME?*

NO.

HEH. WELL, I CAN'T REALLY BLAME YOU FOR THAT. I GUESS THE BEST WAY TO EARN YOUR TRUST IS TO TELL YOU A *SECRET.*

"YOU SEE, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT NO ONE ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE KNOWS...

"I KNOW SOMETHING THAT WILL *CHANGE EVERYTHING."*

WHAT? TELL ME.

IT'S SIMPLE. YOU'RE RIGHT: THANOS *IS* PRACTICALLY A GOD. BUT THE *UNTHINKABLE* IS HAPPENING...

"...THANOS IS *DYING.*"

TO BE CONTINUED...

THANOS

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"Thanos returns."

Those are words the heroes of the Marvel Universe never want to hear, but ones Marvel readers welcome with cheers. After all…who doesn't like a good villain?

Having just wrapped work on a DARTH VADER series, I know I do. I'm halfway through rewatching *Hannibal* on Blu-ray, and I am sure it won't be too long before I revisit *Breaking Bad*. I'm a huge fan of horror movie series, a genre where the villains regularly outshine the heroes, from Freddy to Jason to Chucky to Jigsaw and on and on. My favorite characters on *Game of Thrones* are the Lannisters. Yes—even Cersei.

So what draws us to evil characters? Is it the thrill of the danger they represent? That being near them in fiction provides a thrill without the danger of a real-life encounter? Who can say for sure.

What I do know is that Thanos is one of the most pure evils in the Marvel Universe. A man who once, with a wave of his hand, executed half the universe to impress a woman. Well, a cosmic embodiment of a concept in the form of a woman, anyway. Thanos has striven at different times to both rule and end the universe—and depending on who you ask, he might have even achieved it. In doing so, he's left a path of death and destruction across all of creation, not the least of which was the destruction of his home world, the moon of Titan. In his most recent clash with the heroes of Earth, even armed with foreknowledge of his plans, his opponents could not avoid casualties that cost them dearly.

Now, it's time for Thanos to step into the spotlight…or perhaps I should say it's time for us to follow Thanos into the shadows.

Jeff Lemire has quite a journey planned for Thanos and his extended family. Mike Deodato Jr. has been busy bringing every moment of those plans to life, with Frank Martin and Clayton Cowles wrapping those moments in color and words, respectively. This book is going to be as gorgeous as it is sinister.

Oh—and a special shout-out to the folks at Kabam whose Thanos design for his appearances in the *Contest of Champions* game we've been using as our Thanos template. Much appreciated, folks!

Be seeing you,
Jordan D. White
Editor

Send letters to **MHEROES@MARVEL.COM** or **135 W 50ths St, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10020** (Please mark **"OKAY TO PRINT"**)

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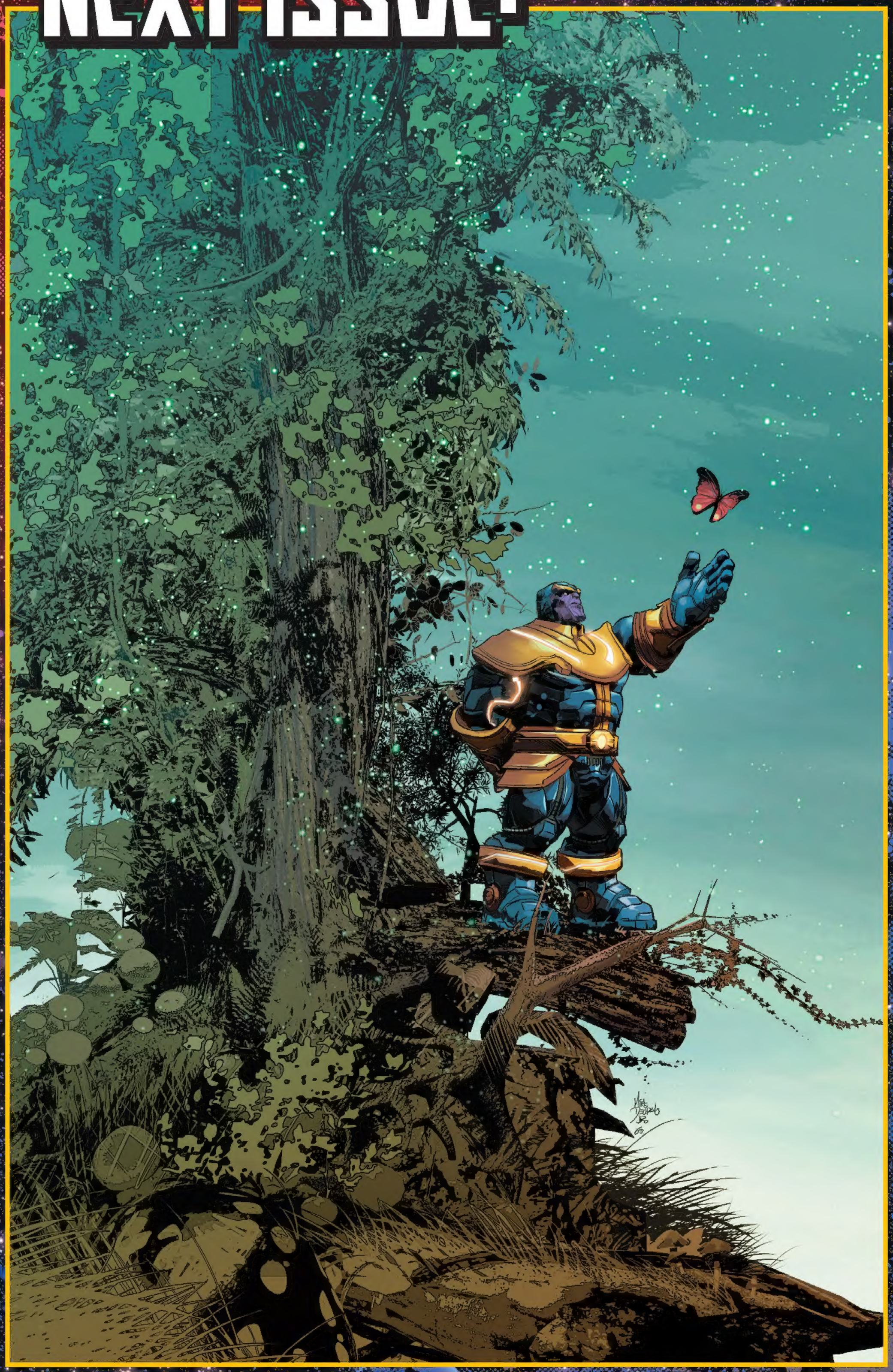

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ZONE